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FARM HOME SURROUNDINGS MADE MORE BEAUTIFUL

A radio talk by E. E. Tucker, County Agricultural Agent, Rockville, Connecticut, delivered in the Land Grant College program of the National Farm and Home Hour, April 18, 1934.

If more time were available we could well discuss Home Surroundings in terms of a picture. That which is more beautiful is often associated in our minds with a good picture, because beauty is soon recognized and copied by trained artists.

Let us first, however, think of farm-home surroundings in a general way, under three heads. (a) tidiness, (b) comfort, (c) welcome.

(a) Under "Tidiness" let us make just an outline to clarify my meaning. First, do we clean up? This is essential because abandoned autos, broken machinery, and any appearance of sloppiness destroy beauty. Tidiness refers to arrangement or plan. This arrangement is quite likely to be settled in our eastern section of the country and it may be somewhat of a major operation to reform long established conditions. Nevertheless re-arrangement for tidiness, orderly management or conformity to our mode of living is worth careful consideration.

Orderliness shows there is a plan somewhere, even if only in some one's head. This is quite a step toward true beauty. Good repair, an important factor in tidiness may include such factors as safe steps, a dry, firm walk and roadway, suitable paint, safe and sound chimneys. Then, of course, livestock should have its place, but not the whole property to mess up.

Our old-time New England villages with their broad shaded streets, white church spires, and gardened homes are a heritage to be lived up to. Some communities sense this. The old folks call them tidy.

(b) "Comfort" Of what use is a farm-home if comfort is lacking? A method of life that demands a seven-day week, long hours and heavy exertion, is not worth the cost if comfort is not evidently attainable.

Evidences of comfort, as they occur to me are warmth and sunlight with shade and shadows. These are used to make beauty in pictures. Arrangement should not be stiffly formal, but restful. It may even appear careless; if there are evident certain places where relaxation is possible, you will find comfort.

These places will need protection from cold winds and scorching sun and should be easily accessible from the house, yet with sufficient privacy and according to circumstances, protection from state road traffic, close neighbors or even wandering hens or farm livestock. Worry or uncertainty drives out comfort.

(c) "Welcome" is a wonderfully important part of beauty. Even an Airedale dog can be beautiful, if his tail wags in welcome. How much more will farm-home surroundings add beauty to themselves if they seem to expect you, if the grounds are arranged for convenience of callers, with a place to park cars,

(over)

some indication of what door to use without violating privacy, if they have convenient seats, dry paths, open spaces, flowers and a definite entrance from the road.

There are economic features of farm-home beautification. A real investment is anything that gives real enjoyment. Beauty does this. Beauty attracts good neighbors of similar tastes and appreciation. This increases values. Beauty stimulates a mental reaction that is distinctly favorable to growth and development of understanding. As homes are the real foundation of the nation, these affect our citizens and our children. Appearance of the home surroundings indicates the type of person living there. The farm home and farm business are likely to be reflections of each other, as being planned, worked for, and successful.

Methods of adding beauty to our home surroundings are various. I have spoken of a definite entrance to grounds, to home, to other areas. Have them definite by good visibility, make them suitable and beautiful.

The lawn is very important and should be reasonably well cared for, suitable in proportion to buildings and to pocket-book. The lawn should be reasonably open and with a dominant mass, and for informal arrangement and best effect should not be cut in the middle.

Plantings should be for definite purposes, such as to soften angles of the buildings, suggest bounds, add height to a flat effect, suggest mystery to certain areas, screen out unpleasant views, add color or variety of mass where the picture will be improved. Trees furnish shade and shadows, a wind-break and a frame for views you like to look at.

Above all things consider unity of plan, the restraint of proportion of one element to the others; don't tackle too much at a time, but always have in mind your accepted plan.

With living plants your job will never be finished except temporarily. As plants grow they must be curbed or given room, must be cut out or re-planted.

Beauty of surroundings, whether added to or restored, or even dreamed of, is very much worthwhile. Let's search for opportunities to create this beauty. These living pictures, if you wish to call them such, are changing by the hour, by the season, by our efforts to improve them.

Let some of these now beautiful pictures be of farm-home surroundings made ever more beautiful by your cooperation.